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OUR HAND IN MAXIMILIAN'S FATE.

IN a paper upon General Grant written by General Badeau and printed in the Boston *Herald*, October 24th, 1886, a degree of responsibility is laid upon General Grant for the execution of Maximilian. The statement attracted my attention from its improbability. There can be no doubt that General Grant was deeply, sincerely, and even bitterly opposed to the establishment of a monarchy in Mexico, but he looked upon Napoleon as the person who was responsible, and solely responsible, for the undertaking. Moreover, General Grant was not only a humane man, but he was indisposed to inflict the penalty of death upon a fallen foe who had been overthrown in a political contest. His policy in regard to the leaders of the rebellion should be accepted as conclusive evidence upon that point.

Next, General Badeau asserts that General Grant gave "indirect advice" to the Mexican Minister in favor of the execution of Maximilian.

This course of action, so attributed to General Grant, is contrary to all that is known of him, whether in private life or in public affairs. He was free from duplicity, and he never shrunk from the responsibility of his opinions, advice, and deeds.

Such being my impressions of the character of General Grant, and having the right through many years of acquaintance and intimacy to count myself among his friends, I wrote a letter to His Excellency M. Romero, of which the following is a copy :

" WASHINGTON, D. C., 1429 New York Avenue, {
" December 20, 1886. }

" SIR : I inclose herewith a strip from the Boston *Herald* of the 24th day of October last, which contains an article written by General Adam Badeau, entitled ' Grant in Peace.'

" I beg leave to call your attention to the paragraph marked, which commences thus:

" ' In 1867 the French were finally withdrawn, and Maximilian was left to his fate.'

"The concluding part of the paragraph reads thus :

"Maximilian was tried like any other individual who sought to subdue the institutions of the State; he was found guilty and shot—a lesson that usurpers will long remember. Grant concurred in the abstract justice of the act. Attempts were made to induce him to recommend clemency, for his influence would have been very great with the Mexicans, who knew how ardently he had supported their cause; but he sternly refused to interfere. Indeed, his indirect advice to the Mexican minister at Washington, doubtless communicated to his Government, was in favor of meting the same punishment to a crowned offender as to humbler culprits."

"As you were the minister referred to, may I ask you whether the above statement is accurate as to General Grant's course in regard to the execution of Maximilian ?

(Signed)

With great respect,

GEO. S. BOUTWELL.

"To His Excellency M. ROMERO,

"Minister Plenipotentiary, etc., etc., Washington, D. C.

"You will please return the slip."

This letter gave rise to the correspondence which follows :

"WASHINGTON, D. C., December 22, 1886.

"MR. GEORGE S. BOUTWELL, 1429 New York Avenue, N. W., Washington, D. C. :

"DEAR SIR: I am in receipt of your letter of the 20th instant, inclosing a slip from the Boston *Herald* of the 24th of October last (which I return to you herewith, in compliance with your request), containing an article written by General Adam Badeau, entitled 'Grant in Peace,' wherein, on speaking of Maximilian's execution in Mexico, June 19th, 1867, after the withdrawal of the French army, you ask me if the statements contained in said article, in regard to General Grant's course in that execution, are correct. It is assumed in that article that attempts were made to obtain General Grant's influence in favor of clemency in Maximilian's case, and that the General not only refused to interfere, but that he advised the Mexican minister at Washington, which position was then filled by me, that he was in favor of meting the same punishment to a crowned offender as to humble culprits.

"Several years having elapsed since those events occurred, I have no exact recollection of them to enable me to bear out or contradict General Badeau's statements. I can assure you, however, that if General Grant had expressed any decided opinion on this point, I would have communicated it to my Government, to whom I exerted myself in keeping posted of everything that occurred here at that time, and no record whatever of this fact, previous to Maximilian's execution, appears in the correspondence of the Mexican Legation, at Washington, from 1861 to 1867, which I have published complete in Mexico, as it contains data which, in my opinion, are indispensable for writing the history of that epoch.

"The Mexican newspapers have recently published a letter I addressed to General Grant from this city, May 31st, 1867, in reply to one which the General wrote to me when he heard here that Queretaro had fallen, May 15th. It appears from said letter that he gave me this advice as to the way in which the vanquished ought to be dealt with.

"I have not in Washington the papers relating to the foreign intervention in Mexico, which I keep at my home in Mexico City, and I am therefore unable to rectify the contents of (the) General Grant's letter; but by the terms of my reply to him I infer that his advice or recommendation was rather in favor of the pardon

of Maximilian. I do not inclose you copy of my letter to General Grant, because I have not here its text, and the publication made of it in Mexico is an inaccurate translation from English into Spanish, and if I should try now to translate it again from Spanish into English, it would differ very much from the original.

"I am very respectfully yours, M. ROMERO."

Mr. Boutwell to M. Romero :

"WASHINGTON, *January 6, 1887.*

"MY DEAR SIR : Your letter of the 22d of December was received at my office during my absence from the city.

"It might lead to the solution of the question presented in my note of the 20th of December, if correct copies of the letter, that passed between you and General Grant, and referred to in the last paragraph of your letter, could be obtained.

"I am anxious, as I think you must be, to have General Grant stand where he chose to place himself. Very truly, GEO. S. BOUTWELL.

"To His Excellency M. Romero,

"Minister, etc., etc."

M. Romero to Mr. Boutwell :

"WASHINGTON, *January 8, 1887.*

"HON. GEO. S. BOUTWELL :

"MY DEAR SIR : It affords me great pleasure to inform you, in answer to your letter of the 6th inst., that soon after I wrote you my previous, of the 22d of December last, I had written to my sister to the City of Mexico, asking her to examine my papers with a view to obtain a correct copy of my letter to General Grant, of May 31st, 1867, on the possible execution of Maximilian, and of the General's letter to which mine was an answer. I think it unnecessary for me to say that I shall do everything in my power to correct any misrepresentations of General Grant's views on that or any other subject.

"Very truly, M. ROMERO."

"WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 26, 1887.*

"HON. GEO. S. BOUTWELL, 1429 New York Avenue, Washington, D. C. :

"MY DEAR SIR : Referring to the letters which I addressed to you on the 22d ultimo and 8th inst., in reply to yours of the 20th of said December and 6th of the present month, wherein I stated that the Mexican newspapers had published a letter purported to have been written by me to General Grant, dated at this city on the 31st of May, 1867, in regard to the probable fate of Maximilian, I beg to say that I have since found that said letter was not addressed to General Grant, but to Mr. Hiram Barney, Ex-Collector of the Port of New York, and that, therefore, General Grant did not express to me in writing any opinion on this subject.

"I am very respectfully your obedient servant,

"M. ROMERO."

Mr. Boutwell to M. Romero :

"WASHINGTON, D. C., *February 2, 1887.*

"MY DEAR SIR : Your favor of the 26th of January is before me, but it does not in terms meet General Badeau's statement. He says that General Grant gave 'indirect advice to the Mexican Minister at Washington' . . . 'in favor of meting the same punishment to a crowned offender as to humbler culprits,' and that this advice was doubtless communicated to your Government. This implies

that the advice was given orally, while your letter of the 26th ult. is limited to advice in writing. Can you say more? Very truly, GEO. S. BOUTWELL.

"To His Excellency M. Romero,

"Minister, etc., etc., Washington."

M. Romero to Mr. Boutwell :

"WASHINGTON, D. C., *February 9, 1887.*

"HON. GEO. S. BOUTWELL, 1429 New York Avenue, N. W.

"MY DEAR SIR : In reply to your favor of the 2d inst., where, in answer to mine of the 26th ultimo, you say that it 'does not in terms meet General Badeau's statement, who says that "General Grant gave indirect advice to the Mexican Minister at Washington. . . . in favor of meting the same punishment to a crowned offender as to humbler culprits,"' and that this advice was doubtless communicated to my Government, I beg to say that having found out that my letter, published by a Mexican newspaper, dated at this city, May 31st, 1867, was not addressed to General Grant, but to Hon. Hiram Barney, [I have to repeat now what I said to you in my letter of the 22d of last December, to wit : that several years having elapsed since those events took place, I do not have an accurate recollection of them to enable me to assuredly confirm or contradict General Badeau's statements in regard to General Grant's opinion about Maximilian's execution, but I can assure you that if General Grant had expressed, in his conversations with me, any decided views on this point, I would have communicated them to my Government, and there is no record of this matter in the correspondence of the Mexican legation at Washington, during the French intervention, previous to said execution—which has been lately published in Mexico].

"I am very truly yours,

"M. ROMERO."

Mr. Boutwell to General Badeau :

"WASHINGTON, *February 11, 1887.*

"MY DEAR SIR : Since the publication of your article of October 24th, 1886, upon General Grant, I have corresponded with His Excellency M. Romero, in regard to your statement touching General Grant's action in the case of Maximilian. The correspondence warrants the conclusion that your statement is erroneous. I think that a correction should be made, and it may be the better way to publish the correspondence. If you have any suggestion to make I shall be happy to receive it.

Very truly,

"GEO. S. BOUTWELL.

"To General Adam Badeau, New York."

General Badeau to Mr. Boutwell :

"28 East 17th Street New York, *February 13, 1887.*

"MY DEAR GOVERNOR: . . . * I am, as you suppose, desirous to be entirely accurate, and would be happy to examine the correspondence between yourself and Mr. Romero, if you will be good enough to send me copies. Thanking you again and in advance,

"I am, dear Governor, very truly yours,

"ADAM BADEAU.

"To Hon. Geo. S. Boutwell, etc."

*The sentences omitted do not relate to the same subject.

Mr. Boutwell to General Badeau :

" WASHINGTON, *February 18, 1887.*

" MY DEAR SIR: I have your letter of the 13th instant, in reply to mine, concerning the action of General Grant in the case of Maximilian. It is not practicable for me to send a copy* of my correspondence with M. Romero, but I will annex a copy of a portion, which, in my opinion, relieves General Grant of all responsibility for the execution of Maximilian.

" Very truly yours,

" GEO. S. BOUTWELL.

" To General Adam Badeau,

" 28 East 17th street, New York."

General Badeau to Mr. Boutwell :

" 28 East 17th Street, NEW YORK, *February 19, 1887.*

" MY DEAR SIR: Of course you do not expect me to change my statement on the authority of M. Romero, when that gentleman, in so many words, declines to contradict me ; and I presume that upon examination you have seen reason to modify your opinion, since you do not send me the correspondence which you proposed for publication.

" I can assure you that my papers are very carefully considered, and that I have received the assistance and approval of General Grant's most distinguished military and political friends. I should still be glad to include you in the number.

" Very truly yours,

ADAM BADEAU.

" The Honorable Geo. S. Boutwell."

Mr. Boutwell to General Badeau :

" WASHINGTON, *February 24, 1887.*

" MY DEAR SIR : This morning I am in receipt of your letter of the 19th inst., with an inclosure marked confidential and dated February 22d. At a convenient time I intend to publish M. Romero's letters.

" If you have proof that General Grant advised the execution of Maximilian, you will not hesitate, I presume, to furnish it to the public. If he so advised the Mexican authorities, his friends cannot complain ; but in the absence of such proof I am unwilling to accept the conclusion that you have reached.

" Very truly,

GEO. S. BOUTWELL.

" To Adam Badeau, Esq.

" New York, 28 E. 17th St."

It is not to be assumed from the circumstance that I have initiated this correspondence, that I entertain the opinion that the execution of Maximilian was either unwise or unjust. My object has been to secure for General Grant the place in history which he made for himself when living.

The testimony of M. Romero justifies these conclusions, viz.:

(1.) That General Grant never made any communication to him in writing in regard to the execution of Maximilian.

* The extract is from Mr. Romero's letter, dated February 9, 1887, and the part is included in brackets.

(2.) That he has no recollection that General Grant ever gave to him in conversation any advice or suggestion upon the subject.

(3.) That if any advice or suggestion had been made to him by General Grant he should have communicated it to his Government.

(4.) That his correspondence with his Government has been printed, and that no reference is made to the opinions or wishes of General Grant upon the subject. Unless the evidence now submitted can be controlled by proofs not now before the public, the statement made by General Badeau ought not to be accepted either for the purposes of general history or personal biography.

GEO. S. BOUTWELL.